



HE HUMBLLED HIMSELF

May 2016

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Philippians 2:3-4

One of my favourite books of the Bible is Paul's letter to the Philippians. I underlined so many of its verses that sometimes I think to myself—I might as well have underlined the whole thing. Such a lot of valuable material!

My favourite part of this book is the description of Christ's humility. If we've decided to follow Jesus, these verses are certainly worth studying. How amazing and what an inspiration it is to read: "[He] made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a

© marja Bergen

Copy to your heart's content. Share. But don't sell.

servant...And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!” (Philippians 2:7-8)

This description of Jesus makes me want to be more like Him. He was a giving person who served others rather than asking to be served. I don't think the Bible asks us to die on a real cross, as Jesus did, but when we're obedient to God's call on our lives we do end up with some kind of cross to bear. Much of what God asks us to do requires courage, strength and perseverance because the work can be challenging. Some of it may bring pain and suffering.

Yet, in spite of this, there is a joy in knowing we're not living for ourselves alone. There's a joy in the giving. Winston Churchill said it well: "We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give." I want to have that kind of life—a meaningful life.

This is such a great lesson! Yet I find that even though I've learned it and taken it to heart many times, I still forget as I get sucked into the daily busyness of life. Most days my concerns seem to involve looking after my own personal comforts. In thinking of my own difficulties, I too often forget about others' needs. I forget that others have interests, important to them as mine are to me.

And that takes us back to the verses at the top of this piece: In humility we're asked to value others above ourselves, looking to their interest before looking to our own. That certainly speaks to the problem I have with self-centeredness when I talk with people! In these verses Paul encourages me to do better. He encourages me to listen to others, realizing that they too have their stories. They, too, want to talk about their lives. They, too, have a need to share their struggles. They would benefit from talking about their joys.

Putting ourselves in another's shoes is all we need to do. Consider what it's like to be our friend. How can we be there for him or her today? We'll probably find that all we need to do is listen.

marja